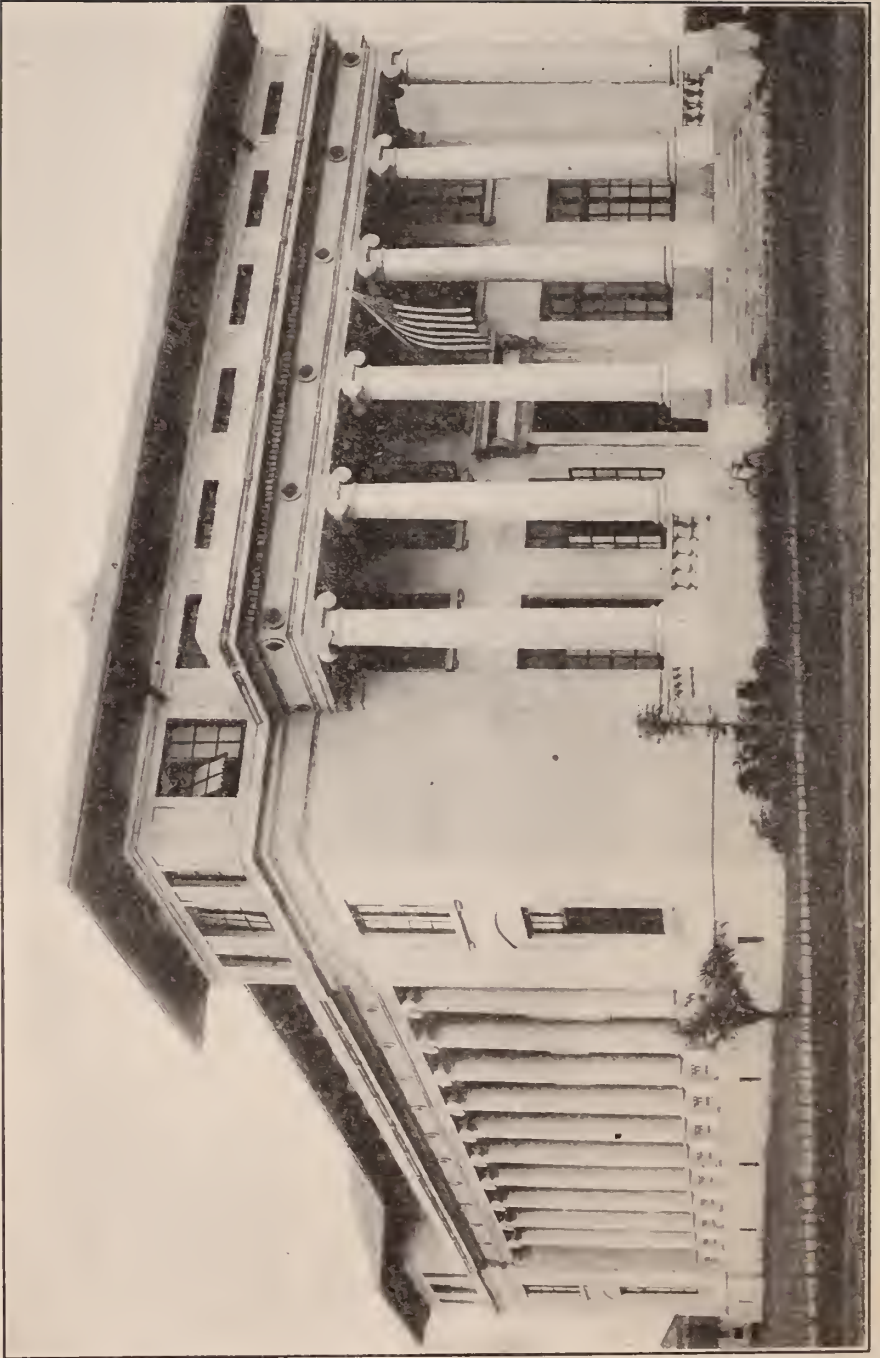


ARGUMENTS AGAINST
PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE
AND THEIR ANSWERS



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WASHINGTON, D. C.
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ARGUMENTS AGAINST
PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE
AND
THEIR ANSWERS

BY
JOSE P. MELENCIO



With an Introduction by
CONRADO BENITEZ
Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, University of the Philippines

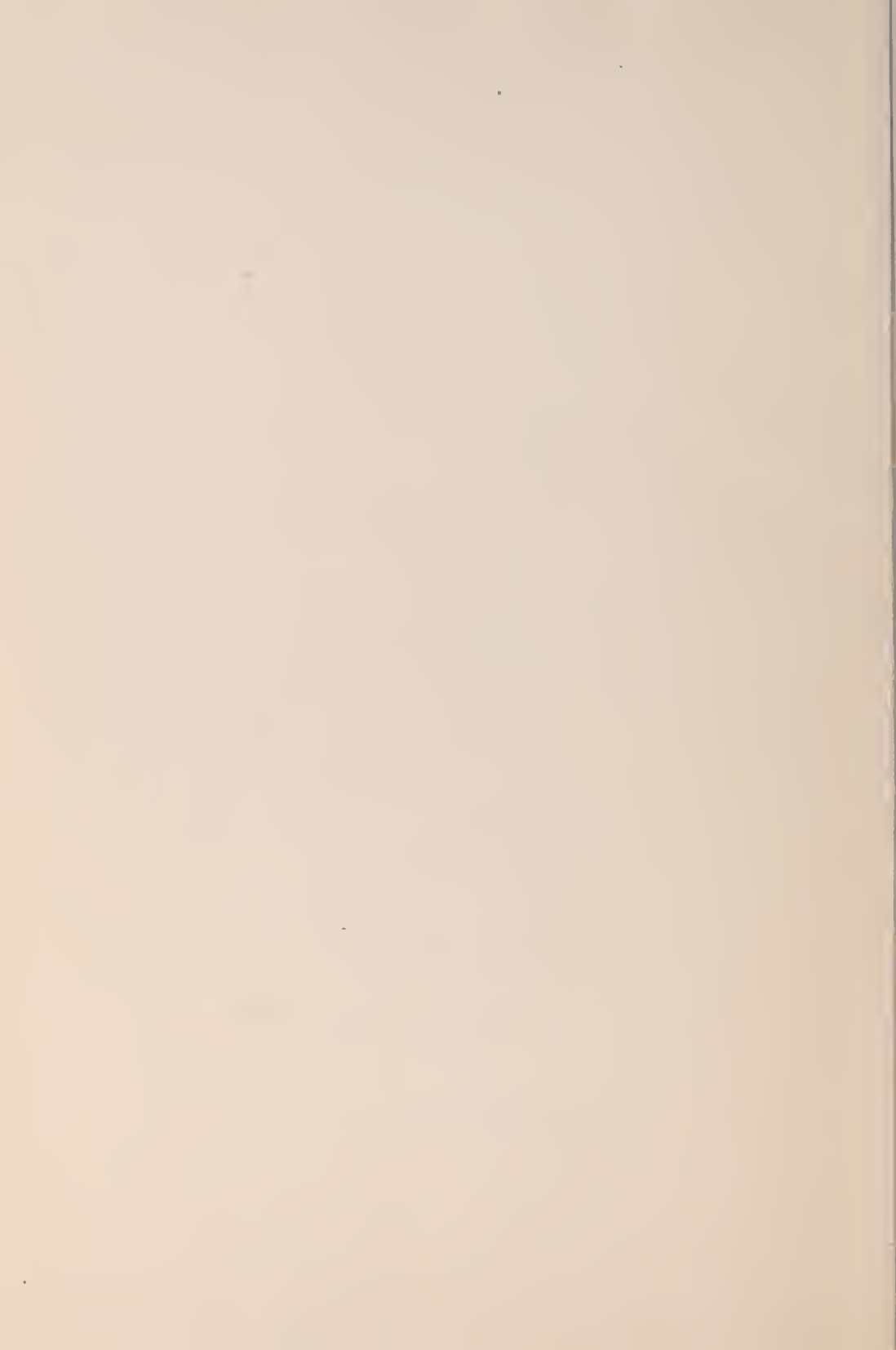
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INTRODUCTION

IT HAS been the privilege of the undersigned to have read almost all of the editorials and newspaper articles about the Philippines published in the United States since the arrival of the Philippine mission last March, and, as a part of the work in the Philippine Press Bureau, it has been his duty to write to those editors whose views were clearly based on misinformation. There were, however, so many of this type of editors that it became well-nigh impossible to write to them all, and to send them the same kind of data which had been already sent to many others. Hence, the necessity of gathering and classifying the arguments advanced, and answering them wholesale in one single publication. This Mr. Jose P. Melencio, graduate of the University of the Philippines, and member of the Philippine bar, has successfully done.

With the publication of our weekly printed press bulletin, sent to all the important newspapers of the United States, and the Philippines, we are now enabled to challenge the truth of many gratuitous assumptions concerning the Filipinos—statements which heretofore had not been questioned because of the absence of Philippine publicity agencies in this country. But our press bulletins reach only newspaper men. On the other hand, the newly awakened interest in the Philippines, and in the Far East generally, has created a big demand for Philippine materials on the part of libraries, colleges, and schools. Already several state departments of education, and colleges have adopted the Philippine problem as a topic for debate. Other institutions, both religious and educational, keep asking for important data. To meet this demand, the Philippine Press Bureau is now in a position to furnish the minimum amount of information which an American citizen should possess before he can intelligently pass judgment upon a vital American problem: the redemption of America's pledge to the Filipino people.

*Washington, D. C.,
September 29, 1919.*

CONRADO BENITEZ.

"The destiny of the Philippine Islands is not to be a state or territory of the United States of America, but a daughter republic of ours—a new birth of liberty on the other side of the Pacific, which shall animate and energize those lovely islands of the tropical seas, and, rearing its head aloft, stand as a monument of progress and a beacon of hope to all the oppressed and benighted millions of the Asiatic continent."—Jacob Gould Schurman.

"We ought to give the Filipinos their independence, even if we have to guarantee it to them. But, by neutralization treaties with the other great powers similar to those which safeguard the integrity and independence of Switzerland today, whereby the other powers would agree not to seize the islands after we give them their independence, the Philippines can be made as permanently neutral territory in Asiatic politics as Switzerland is today in European politics."—James H. Blount.

"Once the United States decide to give the Philippines their freedom, the Japanese government will be the first to sign an agreement for their neutralization."—Premier Hara of Japan.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST
PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE
AND
THEIR ANSWERS

The Arguments Stated Seasoned now and then with caustic and insulting phrases, there are five arguments against Philippine independence that are habitually adduced in this country whenever the question crops up for discussion. These arguments are:

FIRST. *That the Filipinos, if not actually semi-savages, are still fresh from that stage of human development denominated "savagery," and that, therefore, they are not fit to paddle their canoe of state.*

SECOND. *That the Filipinos are a heterogeneous conglomeration of tribal groups, hopelessly differing from one another not only in language but also in customs and aspirations; and that, if given independence, they will be "cutting each other's throats."*

THIRD. *That the bulk of the inhabitants do not desire independence.*

FOURTH. *That at the portals of those beautiful isles, there stands the frightful figure of Japan ready at the first opportunity to seize the archipelago in its iron claw.*

FIFTH. *The promise to haul down the American flag from the Philippines must be withdrawn—the American Republic must be preserved.*

The first three of these arguments are the result of ignorance or of misrepresentations of things Philippine. The fourth is based on pure surmise, and calculated to be a scarecrow. The fifth smacks of imperialism.

The following answers are submitted for the unbiased consideration of this commonwealth:

I.

THE FILIPINOS ARE NEITHER SAVAGES NOR SEMI-SAVAGES.

It is not true that the Filipino people are savages. Neither is it true that they are semi-savages. It is admitted that there are about 500,000 non-Christian peoples in the archipelago, who used to be in a stage of savagery, dressed in scanty garments, indulging in head-hunting at times, and dwelling in the mountains with only the bow and arrow as their venerable companions. But the days of head-hunting are gone. The mountain tribes as well as the Moros of Mindanao are fast being won over to the ways of civilization and of Americanism. Schools, hospitals and religious centers have been instituted among them. Many of them have been Christianized. They actually enter into trade transactions with the rest of the natives.

But the significant fact is, that they constitute but a small fraction of the entire population of the islands, which is 10,500,000. There are ten million Christian Filipinos. They have been Christians for 333 years. Forty-five per cent of the entire population of ten years of age and over were literate before the Americans came. They have been educated in the schools which Spain had the kindness to establish among them. The foremost Spanish University in Manila is a quarter of a century older than Harvard. The founders of the short-lived Philippine Republic were, and many of the leaders of today are, products of Spanish schools. The system of teaching pursued was mediæval to be sure. But the Filipinos made the best of it, and we were fairly well transformed into Mediæval Europeans long before the implantation of America's sovereignty. The percentage of literacy now is 70 per cent. It is higher than the percentage in Italy, Greece, Roumania; higher than in most countries whose independence has recently been recognized by the associated powers.

The non-Christian peoples of the Philippines have always been accorded just treatment by the Christian population. Now they have representatives in each of the Houses of the

Philippine Legislature. There is a Moro Senator, two Moro Representatives, and one Igorot. The Mohammedan religion is respected by the rest of the archipelago, resulting in a closer relation between the Moros of Mindanao and the Christians of Luzon and the Visayas. The following passage in a speech of a Moslem third member of the sub-province of Zamboanga is significant:

"He who thinks that it is impossible for the Meslem and the Filipino to live together in peace and participate together in the government is foolish and lacks wisdom."

The summer capital of the Philippine Islands (Baguio) is located in the heart of the mountains of Northern Luzon where Igorots abound. Daily, multitudes of them can be seen coming down from their homes among the pine trees, bringing the products of their plantations to the market, buying of the Christian Filipinos whatever objects attract their taste, and otherwise mingling peacefully with the visitors from the lowlands. Daily, they can be seen serving as waiters in hotels, employed as messengers and salesmen in stores, or acting as guides through the fastnesses of the mountains. In recognition of their civic virtue, the charter of the city provides that there shall be an advisory council to be composed of Igorots. Igorots play baseball and tennis; they send their children to school. Many of them are intermediate graduates, and many more are in the high schools. One Igorot is about to receive his degree of Doctor of Medicine in the University of the Philippines. Those who are Christians bear American names (such as Clapp, Irving, etc.), and are proud of it.

It will surely be a question of only a *decade or so* when the non-Christian peoples of the Philippines will be completely won over to the ways and manners of civilized races. Being immuned from Mediæval influences, and being reared exclusively under the ambient air of Americanism, they are destined to be a vigorous element in the ensuing processes of Philippine nationalism.

There is one thing that the Filipino people have regretted ever since their association with America began. It is, that Americans, the great bulk of them, have always thought that twenty years ago the people of the islands were still in the

Pre-Spanish
Civilization of
the Filipinos

paleolithic stage of human development, and that it was only when the Americans came that the processes of Filipino regeneration commenced. We humbly retort that the Filipino people were possessed of a civilization of their own even before the Spaniards came. This is not stated by way of self-laudation. It is the opinion of foreign writers, who, unbiased, have delved into the records of the centuries and have reproduced their discoveries in print. The following quotations are submitted:

"The inhabitants of the Philippines possessed a culture of their own prior to the coming of the Spaniards to the islands. Those along the coasts were the most advanced in civilization. Their material wealth was considerable. The chief occupations were agriculture, fishing, weaving, some manufacturing, and trade both inter-island and with the mainland, generally in the form of barter. They were expert navigators. They used standard weights and measures. The year was divided into twelve lunar months. They had a peculiar phonetic alphabet, wrote upon leaves, and had a primitive literature. The majority of the people are said to have been able to read and write." (*Justice George A. Malcolm, "The Government of the Philippine Islands," pp. 27 and 28.*)

"The inhabitants of these islands were by no means savages, entirely unreclaimed from barbarism before the Spanish advent in the sixteenth century. They had a culture of their own." (*John Foreman, an English scholar.*)

"They had already reached a considerable degree of civilization at the time of the Spanish conquest." (*Ferdinand Blumentritt, an Austrian professor.*)

"Upon the arrival of the Spaniards, they found the ancestors of the present-day Filipinos in possession of considerable culture which is somewhat comparable to that of some of the mountain peoples of today." (*Dr. James A. Robertson, an American scholar.*)

Advancement
During the
Spanish Regime

Three centuries of Spanish domination, despite its vices and illiberalties, had improved the condition and extended the attainment and culture of the inhabitants of the Philippines. Let foreign writers again speak:

"Three million people inhabit these different islands, and that of Luzon contains nearly a third of them. *These people seemed to me no way inferior to those of Europe; they cultivate the soil with intelligence; they are carpenters, cabinet-makers, smiths, jewelers,*

weavers, masons, etc. I have gone through their villages and I have found them kind, hospitable, and affable." (*"Voyage de la Perouse, author du Monde," Paris, 1797, II, p. 347.*)

"If the general condition of the civilization of the Tagalos, Pampangos, Bicoles, Bisayans, Ilocanos, Cagayanos, and Sambales is compared to the European constitutional countries of Servia, Roumania, Bulgaria and Greece, the Spanish-Filipino civilization of the said Indian districts is greater and of larger extent than of those countries." (*Ferdinand Blumentritt, in La Solidaridad of October 15, 1899.*)

" * * * the Spanish rule was generally a mild one, partaking of a patriarchal character. * * * The governors and the governed married, mingled socially and worshipped together. * * * Latin civilization was implanted. This found its principal avenues through the results of Christianity; the unifying influences of a central administration; modern laws; education, although not universal; freedom for women far in advanced of other Oriental countries; the introduction of other staple products; and contact with the outer world." (*Justice George A. Malcolm, The Government of the Philippine Islands, pp. 102-103.*)

THE FILIPINOS ARE READY FOR INDEPENDENCE.

But, then, it is said that, despite their own civilization, despite the progress they have accumulated through the years, despite their magnificent response to America's approach—despite all this, it is said that the Filipinos are not fit to be the directors of their own affairs. America has preferred to give credence to the haphazard statements of travelers and to the sweeping assertions of multicolored interests. The opinions of her own governmental representatives—that of Admiral Dewey, those of the governors that were, and that of the actual incumbent—opinions expressed in their official capacity and under their official responsibility attesting to the capacity of the Filipino people to set up an independent nation—have all been discounted. It is easy to understand, however, why advocates of retention should harp upon, and ever and anon blazon out to the world, the unfitness of the Filipinos for self-government. We say it is easy to understand, because it is the only ground on which prolonged sovereignty over the Philippines can possibly be justified. In the words of Mr. Blount, "*ever since Mr. McKinley took the Philippines, it has been the awkward but inexorable duty of the defenders of*

that good man's fame to deprecate Filipino capacity for self government."

The Filipinos submit that, tested by their showing of the last twenty years, their capacity for an independent national status cannot be challenged. All of the provincial governors who are the chief executives of the provinces, are now Filipinos, except the governors of the provinces of Cotabato, Lanao and Sulu, in the department of Mindanao and Sulu. Of the forty-six provincial treasurers, who are the chief financial officers, only seven are Americans.

The Philippine Government Is Autonomous

There are thirty Filipino district engineers and thirteen Americans. There are about 1,000 municipalities in the Philippines all of which are governed by elective Filipino officials. There are about forty-five provinces likewise governed by Filipinos. There are two elective houses of the legislature composed entirely of Filipinos and elected by direct popular suffrage. Out of seven members in the Cabinet six are Filipinos, and most of the heads of the executive departments of the government are Filipinos. The Insular Treasurer is a Filipino. Almost all of the teachers of the primary schools are Filipinos. Ninety-eight per cent of the teachers in the intermediate schools are Filipinos. And of the teaching force in the secondary schools, 44 per cent are Filipinos. Of the 350 supervising teachers 86 per cent are Filipinos and the majority of the academic and industrial supervisors are also Filipinos. There are six Filipino division superintendents of schools, and both the assistant director of education and the undersecretary of public instruction are Filipinos. About 50 per cent of the instructors and professors in the University of the Philippines are Filipinos. The local administration of justice is entirely in the hands of Filipinos, with the exception of sixteen American ex-officio justices of the peace. Of the twenty-six District Judges of First Instance, nineteen are Filipinos and seven are Americans. There are four Filipinos and five American Justices in the Supreme Court. The Chief Justice has always been a Filipino.

That is how autonomous our institutions are. And that is the autonomy which the Filipinos want converted into genuine sovereignty. We desire an international personality. We can never

hope to be a virile nation or race unless we are left alone to stand the battering of the times. The question of our fitness for self-government is for us to determine. WE KNOW THAT WE ARE FIT.

II.

THE FILIPINOS ARE A HOMOGENEOUS PEOPLE.

Secondly, it is not true that the inhabitants of the Philippines are a heterogeneous mass of more or less antagonistic tribes ready to spring upon each other's throat as soon as they are set free. The outstanding fact is, that despite the distances from one island to another, we are a remarkably homogeneous people. In the words of Mr. Taft,

**Word "Tribe"
a Misnomer**

"the word 'tribe' gives an erroneous impression. There is no tribal relation among them. There is a racial solidarity among the Filipino people, undoubtedly. They are homogeneous. I cannot tell the difference between an Ilocano and a Tagalog, or a Visayan. The Ilocanos, it would seem to me, have something of an admixture of the Japanese blood; the Tagalogs have rather more of the Chinese; and it seems to me that the Visayans had still more. But to me all the Filipinos were alike."

From the mountain tops of Luzon to the southernmost point of Mindanao the peoples have similar features and color; their ways and manners are very much the same; their style of living and their customs are very much alike; and they are being educated along identical lines. True, they speak many languages; for that topography has been responsible. But they have always had a common medium of social and governmental intercourse. It used to be the Spanish language. It

**A Common
Language Exists**

is now fast being supplanted by the English. And English is well-nigh the exclusive social and official language of the archipelago. The system of education is so conceived and executed as to conduce to that end inevitably. American methods and standard of living, American history and ideals, are being daily brought home to the children. All which makes for a strong nationality, for a virile spirit of nationalism that will be more potent as the days go by.

There exists no antagonism whatever between the various peoples of the Philippines. The national legislature is composed of men from all "tribes." All groups enjoy equal civic rights. Sectional riots have never transpired. The test for a governmental position is not a sectional test: it is individual mettle and capacity. The President of the Philippine Senate is a Tagalo. The Speaker of the House of Representatives is a Visayan. The Attorney General is an Ilocano. The President of the University is an Ilocano. And so on in gradation. Everywhere in the government, the Tagalo works side by side with the Visayan, Ilocano or Bicolano. No cleavage between the "tribes" can be shown to exist, and no cleavage has ever existed.

Likewise, aristocracy and caste are absent in the social and political structure of the Philippines. The Four Hundred, in its popular acceptance, finds no counterpart there. The wealth of the islands is evenly distributed. There is an unusual division of land among the people, giving rise to an intelligent middle class. There are no big industrial combines such as America has, which are often accused of tampering with legislation. Our leaders rise to power, not through money or pull. They rise through grit and intellectual alertness. Many of the foremost men in the islands today have come from the humblest families dwelling in unpretentious nipa homes. The spirit of our institutions is identical with America's spirit—the spirit of equal opportunity to all. *It is the spirit that makes men free.*

And what is most remarkable—we need not give instructions in a hundred per cent Philippinism. We need no apostles to preach that kind of a gospel. We are not confronted with the stupendous task of making every citizen a hundred per cent Filipino. We have no anarchists in our midst. No bolsheviks. No I. W. Ws. A Filipino, however hyphenated he be, loves his flag, which, by law, he is not permitted to display. He loves his country. He does not think of disrupting her. He would fight, bleed and die for her.

But, then, it is prophesied that if independence is granted, "the people will quarrel, there will be rival factions, and neither will

have the mental balance to accept results that are adverse." So be it. But we answer: Was not America's civil war the great disruption that promptly solidified her national structure, until today she is the mightiest commonwealth on the face of the globe?

III.

THE FILIPINO PEOPLE ARE ONE IN THEIR DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE.

It is not true that the Filipinos as a whole do not want independence. All statements to the contrary are calculated to defeat the present campaign for independence, for reasons more or less personal. The mission that recently visited this country, for example, has been attacked as non-representative of the will of the masses and that it was

Composition of the Philippine Mission composed of a coterie of politicians dominated solely by a desire to attain personal distinction.

The facts about that mission are as clear as day. It was composed of members of both Houses of the Philippine Legislature and of representatives of the commercial, labor and agricultural interests of the islands. *Both parties of the Philippines were likewise represented.* The mission was created by the so-called Commission of Independence, which, in turn, was created by the Philippine Legislature and is a permanent body enjoined to consider and report to the Legislature: (a) Ways and means of negotiating now for the granting and recognition of the independence of the Philippines; (b) external guarantees of the stability and permanence of said independence as well as of territorial integrity; (c) ways and means of organizing in a speedy, effectual and orderly manner a constitutional and democratic internal government. The sending of the mission had the sanction of the Legislature, as is evident from Concurrent Resolution No. 11 passed by that body. That sanction was supplemented by a "Declaration of Purposes" which was drawn up by the same Legislature for the guidance of both the Commission of Independence and the Philippine mission to this country. In that "Declaration of Purposes" the Legislature expressly says: *"Therefore, as far as it is humanly possible to judge and say, we can see only one aim for the Commission of Independence: Independence; and we can give only one instruction: To get it."*

Now, it must be conceded that all representative governments are based on the principle that the constituted delegates of the

people are the true spokesmen of their desires. This is the very essence of the system of popular representation. That being the case, it is not understood how any man acquainted with republican institutions can assert that the action taken by the Philippine Legislature does not reflect the real desires of the Filipino people.

But that is not all. As soon as the sending of the Philippine mission was approved by the Philippine Legislature, the 1,000 municipalities of the islands as well as the various associations throughout the archipelago flooded Manila with resolutions unanimously ratifying the step taken. Organs of public opinion, in their editorial columns as well as in their special articles, were also emphatic in their approval of the sending of the mission to this country. The manifestation at the pier when the mission sailed was an eloquent and graphic testimony of the popular sentiment with regard to independence.

These facts, coupled with the further fact that the Philippine mission came over at the expense of the Filipino people, conclusively show that the Filipino people endorse the purposes for which the mission had come. If the movement for independence fails at this time, other missions will be sent in the future to raise with more vigor the Philippine cry for that ideal.

It is indeed idle to speak of the Filipinos as not desiring their freedom when history records that they fought for that freedom before the Americans came. They had established a republic before America set foot on Philippine soil. They resisted America's coming by force of arms during all the time that America had not specifically proclaimed her real colonial policy. It was only when America announced that she came to the Philippines, not for the purpose of exploiting the islands, but for the purpose of lifting them to the level of modern civilization that the Filipinos consented to be under America's control for the time being.

Today especially when imperialism has already been dislodged from the throne-rooms of empires and when freedom is the tide and passion of the time, it is a bagatelle to say that our people do not want independence. Our desire for independence is not the mere wild prank of a raw, unbalanced populace; it is a national movement to consummate a dearly cherished national ideal. It will not do to dismiss our plea with an icy smile.

IV.

THE JAPANESE BUGABOO.

Statements that Japan covets the Philippines are based on sheer surmise. No facts have been cited to support them. The papers would have it understood that Japan will just lay its claws on the Philippines, reason or no reason. By some such statements

the American people were scarecrowed a few years ago not with respect to the Philippines but with respect to America herself. It was said that Japan desired to invade America; that America, unprotected as she was, was an easy prey. Years have passed since then, and the prophecy was not fulfilled. Will the prophecy be fulfilled in the case of the Philippines? The Filipinos think otherwise, and their opinion is based on the considerations that follow:

The flow of Japanese immigrants into the Philippines is negligible as compared with the flow into the United States, California and Hawaii specially. Today, there are only about 10,000 Japanese in the Philippines. If it was the intention of Japan's diplomacy to absorb the islands through pacific methods, an unlimited number of her subjects would have been sent to the country year in and year out. Be that as it may, the United States today is not giving the Philippines protection against that system of conquest. The Philippine Legislature, for example, enacted a law limiting the ownership of Philippine lands to Americans and Filipinos, but that law required the approval of the President, and the State Department decided to recommend that it be vetoed; so the law had to be withdrawn.

Japan has repeatedly belied her intention to colonize the islands. Count Okuma, while premier of Japan, has explicitly said: "Japan has no ulterior motive, no desire to secure more territory, no thought of depriving China or any other people of anything they now possess." Dr. T. Masao, the President of

the recent Parliamentary Mission that visited Manila, has assured the islands thus: "Japan and the Philippines are the best of friends. There is no ground, no basis, no foundation for quarrel and suspicion. You are rich in natural resources. Your country is immensely wealthy in raw products. Japan is eminently a manufacturing country. We are rich in finished products. There is every reason

to be gained by mutual friendly and peaceful co-operation." The present Premier of Japan has likewise stated in his official capacity that Japan has no intention to take over the Philippines for colonial purposes, and that the Japanese government will be the first to sign an agreement for the neutralization of the archipelago. To the same effect was Baron Uchida's assurance.

The Filipinos see no reason why these utterances should be distrusted. On the contrary, we are aware that the spirit of Bushido is incrustated in the consciousness of Japan—she respects her given word. *And at times we are even led to think that if at all Japan poses as the champion of the Orient, with now and then an outpouring of hostility against the Occident,* it is because all East has ever painfully suffered from the racial prejudice of the West.

Then there is the general attitude of Oriental peoples towards the Japanese to be considered. Japan's designs on China have been exposed before the powers in the peace conference. The Chinese, as a bulk, have never liked the Japanese by reason of the many concessions that have been wrung from China by the Japanese government, under the guise of "spheres of influence." These spheres of influence are in fact and import a shattering of Chinese territorial integrity, an absorption of China's most fertile spots, such as her regions of coal supply, her iron mines, and the like. The more Japan encroaches upon the mainland of China, the more will the Chinese feel that their destiny as a nation is doomed and the more they will dislike the Japanese as a people. The case of Shantung has intensified that dislike. And if ever China awakes from her lethargy, Japan will have to account for all the alleged affronts.

Korea is actually in revolution against her Japanese rulers. The spirit of nationalism is surging in this land of 18,000,000 people. Hatred against the Japanese is manifested on every side. Actual force has been necessary to quell disturbances. Freedom is the cry there.

Russia, which is a country of astounding magnitude, lies in the north of Japan. The results of the Russo-Japanese war are still painfully fresh in the minds of the Russians. The day may

yet come when the Russians will attempt to wrench from the Japanese that part of Russian territory known as Manchuria which might and the tide of battle have thrown into the hands of the Japanese.

Japan, therefore, is surrounded by peoples not bound to her by ties of blood or national interests, peoples who look upon her international acts with open fear and suspicion, peoples who have never been willing to be subject peoples, peoples who are awake to the modern principles of government and of international relations.

To add to that array of unwilling nationalities another unwilling nationality like the Philippines would be to throw the whole East into a camp always antagonistic to pretensions of domination on the part of Japan. In the course of time, the potency of the antagonism will be irresistible.

The Filipinos will never condescend to look up to the Japanese as their rulers. The reason is plain: Their custom and manners, their religion and their ideals are glaringly different from, if not antagonistic to, those of the Japanese.

Japan, of course, might indulge in the hazardous act of killing every Filipino—of wiping the entire race out of the globe, a cold-blooded deed. But would she in the light of Germany's experience?

Strategically also, it would be unwise for Japan to add to her already scattered territory a group of islands numbering about 3,000, because all of these must needs be protected and fortified if Japan is to remain secure in her foothold.

Viewed from all these aspects, the sanest course for Japan to take with regard to the East is to court the friendship of all Oriental peoples. *This is the sanest course notwithstanding the Ishii-Lansing agreement or any other gentlemen's agreement that might exist or be negotiated.* To pose as the

The Sanest Course for Japan to Take Master of the Orient will be hazardous for Japan in the extreme. The staunchest opposition will come from the Philippines. Other nationalities of the Far East will follow suit, for the nations there are attuned to the new era of progressive humanity. The Filipinos would be glad to be a friend to Japan

commercially and internationally. They would contribute their mite in the regeneration of the East. But they will never countenance Japanese domination over them: they will never consent to be a footstool of the Nipponese Empire.

But all these considerations aside, it would seem that all hobgoblins concerning the Japanese menace should vanish in the face of the new order of things in the world. Reference is made to the new international instrumentality which has just been instituted by the powers and denominated the **The League of Nations**. This is the most promising creation of the age. The old order of perpetual conquest and dominion-seeking has been blotted out. The peoples of the world are war-weary. "Never again!" is their plaintive cry. That might is right is a discarded pet phrase of the militant world. The rights of small nationalities have been vindicated and safeguarded. The Parliament of Man and the Federation of the World of which Tennyson had sung is well-nigh a reality.

We Filipinos are not pinning our faith, however, on the machinery or efficacy of the League of Nations. *If the world is to remain donned in armors of steel and iron, we, too, could equip land and naval forces.* We confidently believe we could turn out fighters that can approximate, if not equal, other soldiers of the world in valor and skill. We, too, can fortify our islands. We are aware that despite their numerousness, they have a *unique military advantage—a physical strategic unity.* In the words of Messrs. Davis, Frye and Reid, "there is hardly a single island in the group from which you cannot shoot across to one or more of the others—scarcely another archipelago in the world in which the islands are crowded as closely together and so interdependent." (*Cited in Blount, "The American Occupation of the Philippines," p. 133.*)

V.

WILL AMERICA BE IMPERIALISTIC?

The traditional policy of America is against colonial expansion. From the foundation of this Republic to the present day, the American people have adhered to that policy. When, therefore, we hear American statesmen today crying in vigorous language that the promise of independence to the Philippines should be withdrawn lest the American republic disintegrate, we are tempted

to suspect that some Americans are resolved to override their country's traditions.

The Philippines fell under America's domination by the stroke of chance. The taking of the islands was not an inevitable result of the war to liberate Cuba. America herself was startled when Dewey cabled the unexpected news that the American flag had been hoisted on Philippine soil. That America had no right to take the Philippines may be proved beyond question. Mr. James H. Blount has done that admirably in his book, "American Occupation of the Philippines." We shall not rehearse the circumstances here, because it will only be re-viving the gloomy discord of the past.

**America's
Right to Take
the Islands**

The people of this country know that the Filipinos have always been desirous of being free. The resistance to America's coming is the eloquent proof of the sentiment in the Philippines with regard to freedom. Ever since the implantation of American

**America's
Promise of
Independence**

sovereignty the spirit of nationalism has been vigorously asserting itself in the archipelago. The clamor for independence has been insistent. It became acute somewhere in 1916, and the Jones Bill was passed by the United States Congress, which announced in unequivocal terms that America will unrivet the shackles of political bondage and give the long-awaited independence as soon as a stable government is established by the Filipinos. The Filipino people firmly believe that this declaration by the duly constituted representatives of the American nation will not be a mere scrap of paper, to be shriveled to ashes at the whim of imperialistic souls. It will not do to contend, as one writer has contended, that the preamble of the Jones Law of August 29, 1916, containing that declaration, is not an integral part of the law itself and that, therefore, it may be flung aside by succeeding Congresses if they so choose. Despite that fact, if fact it be *fairly and logically*, the promise to grant independence is there, clear and unmistakable. It is in black and white. It is a ratification of the policies enunciated by the Presidents of America, from McKinley down. To repudiate the promise, as was ponderously trumpeted some time ago, is the most crass injustice that can be perpetrated by America upon a people whose only national fault, in the words of Andrew Car-

negie, "is that they believe in the American Declaration of Independence."

The Philippines have never been an integral part of the American republic. America's Constitution did not follow her flag in the islands. The Filipinos have never been American citizens as the Porto Ricans have been. The twenty million dollars paid

**The Philippines
Never an
Integral Part
of America**

Spain by the United States was not a purchase price of the islands and their people. The amount was paid: *First*, as a salve to Spain's feelings; *second*, as an assumption of Spain's debt for pacific improvements, existing then in the form of bonds bearing 6 per cent interest; and *third*, because America preferred to pay the sum rather than indulge anew in the costly luxury of war. (*Vide*, "The Americans in the Philippines," by Le Roy, p. 124, note; also pp. 369-370; "The Government of the Philippine Islands," by Geo. A. Malcolm, pp. 178 and 179; pp. 193-194, note.) If the Philippines are not, thus, an integral part of America, it is not seen how it can be averred that if the islands be given their status as a sovereign nation, the American republic would disintegrate.

One thing should not be overlooked: the sooner independence is granted to the Filipinos the stronger will be the ties that bind them to the American commonwealth and to the American people; the more the granting is delayed the more will the Filipinos suspect that America is bent on the perpetual retention of the archipelago and the denial of the righteous claims of Philippine nationalism. That would be astoundingly disappointing to the Filipinos whose love for freedom is inborn. Admiration for America might dwindle as a consequence, and trade relations between America and the Philippines might suffer impairment.

The granting of independence to the islands should not necessarily jeopardize America's interests in the Eastern hemisphere. The attitude of the Filipino people with regard to the matter seems to be this: If America desires coaling stations in the

**America's Eastern
Interests and
Philippine Independence
Are Compatible**

Philippines, she may have them as well under a Philippine republic. If America desires to make Manila her threshold to the trade of the rapidly unfolding East, she shall have the privilege under a government by the Filipinos. If America must have military and naval bases in the

archipelago—if she must have an “easternmost frontier,” as one American editor has expressed it—she will also have that. The proposition of the Filipinos today is to have America recognize now the independence of the Philippines, under terms to be negotiated upon by duly appointed representatives of the Americans on one part and of the Filipinos on the other. The Filipinos owe to America much of what they and their country are today, and it is not selfish—much less, unreasonable—for Americans to insist that any political arrangement affecting the status of the islands shall definitely and adequately safeguard the needs of America’s commerce.

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THERE IS A STABLE GOVERNMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES TODAY.

There is *only one* condition precedent to the granting of Philippine independence. And that is, that as soon as a stable government has been established in the islands, independence will be granted. There is today a stable government in the Philippines.

**The Only Condition
Precedent to the
Granting of Philippine
Independence**

It is a government elected by the peaceful suffrages of the people, supported by the people, capable of maintaining order and of fulfilling its international obligations. It is patterned after republican institutions. It has the necessary checks and balances. It is run on the party system. We have a legislature which is composed entirely of Filipinos, and elected by direct popular suffrage. We have a Council of State which is an advisory body to the governor general. It determines the policy of the different departments of the government and recommends measures to the Legislature. We are more progressive than many countries of the world in fiscal legislation; we have adopted the budget system of government appropriation and expenditures, and this has systematized our finances.

**Structure of
Present Philippine
Government**

Our government is divided into several departments, much in the same way that the United States Government is divided. At the head of each department is a Secretary. And the department secretaries constitute the Cabinet, the members of which might appear or might

be summoned before the legislature to account for their acts. They are thus directly responsible not only to the chief executive of the islands, but also to the representatives of the people.

The whole archipelago is divided into provinces; they correspond to the states of the American Union. Each province is divided into municipalities; these correspond to the counties of the United States. At the head of each province is a governor; the legislative body is Provincial Board. The executive of each municipality is a president; the legislative body is a municipal council. The governors, the presidents and the members of the local legislative bodies are all elected by direct popular suffrage.

Such in skeleton is our system of government. It has been functioning without a hitch ever since its adoption. It combines the fine traits of American institutions and the virile attribute of the English system of governmental finance. Above all, it has been honest. And it is self-supporting. It has established peace and order throughout the archipelago. It has undertaken numerous public works. It has made education universal and free. It has improved the sanitation of the islands. It has encouraged agricultural and industrial enterprises. It has extended credit.

It is not a fact, as many Americans assert, that the islands are a financial burden to the United States. The Insular Treasury has always had sufficient funds with which to meet all the expenses of the Insular Government, and a surplus besides. No United

The Islands Are Self-Supporting States dollar has ever been expended in the sanitation, education, and public works of the archipelago. What America has done was to furnish the brains, the enterprise, and the example with which to hasten the material and intellectual development of the Filipino nation. The financial part of the undertaking was borne by the Filipinos through a representative system of taxation.

America, it is true, has a standing army in the Philippines which is paid from the United States Treasury. But the existence and maintenance of that standing army are incident upon the taking over and retention of the islands. Clearly, if America must continue holding a territorial possession, she necessarily must have forces and fortifications with which to challenge aggressive designs on the part of any other power.

LET US HAVE FAIR PLAY

We protest against the insidious tactics of some American writers who, in the haste to cripple the Filipino plea for independence, invariably decorate their magazine and newspaper articles with pictures of the backward, scantily dressed, peoples of the Philippines. We call that foul play. For those people are by no means representative of the bulk of Filipinos. They constitute the decided minority—one-twentieth of the total population of the archipelago. They inhabit the mountains and do not meddle with the affairs below. *It is not fair to predicate Filipino capacity for self-government on the looks, attire and backwardness of those mountain people. They are to the Philippines what the Indians are to America—no more, no less.* The 10,000,000 Christian Filipinos are doing their best to educate, Christianize and otherwise bring them within the fold of modern civilization. We do not seek to exterminate or exploit them. We do not confine them in reservations. We are approaching them in the most friendly way. And they are responding eagerly.

Islands Have Been Misrepresented So, too, by press materials cunningly arrayed and cunningly written, actual conditions in the Philippines have been twisted. Our manners and mode of living have been ridiculed. *We have been misrepresented beyond forgetting. Our defects have been exaggerated. And our virtues and attainments have been misanthropically brushed aside.*

We would request the writers who are antagonistic to the Philippine ideal to once in a while favor our cause with pictures and descriptions of the conditions of today—not of the conditions of two decades ago—in the regions where modernity has had its touch.

To American eyes, it may be true that we are crude in unnumbered ways, that our proletariat are oftentimes destitute of the means by which they could enjoy the modern comforts of life, that our standard of living is very far behind that of America, that we have traits that are not very Occidental. But these are no arguments against our ability to govern ourselves. Neither should they be made a deterrent to the granting of our complete independence. For we are advanced in thought and ideas; we realize the advantages and, unbaffled, we practice the ways of

modern republicanism; we have the poise, the intelligence and the aplomb that are essential in a democracy.

“Let him who scoffs at the impossibility of Philippine progress without even awaiting events make a comparison between the United States when she adopted her Constitution, and the Philippines if she be permitted to ratify hers. In 1790 the number of inhabitants in the United States was under four million. The Philippines have double this. Of the American inhabitants, nearly one-fifth were negroes. The Philippines have nowhere near this proportion of non-Christians. Of the American inhabitants, the ancestors of eight-tenths were probably English and a homogeneous part of the community. Of the Filipinos, at least as large a percentage are of one race. Of the Americans, the intellect of the people was little developed. The graduating classes of all the colleges in 1789 counted up to about 170. The graduating classes of one university in the Philippines exceed this number. In economic conditions the United States were little advanced, although the country abounded in natural resources. The same statement can be written for the Philippines.” (*Justice Geo. A. Malcolm: “Government of the Philippine Islands,” p. 250.*)

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CONCLUSION

We wish to write across the consciousness of America that the Filipinos are a nation moved by an intense desire to be free; that we are a people with a feeling and a sense of dignity, and as such resent the numerous insults repeatedly hurled against us; that it is not fair that we be invariably and indiscriminately pictured as savages, neither is it just that our defects should be exaggerated and our virtues ignored, whenever we press our claims to sovereignty.

The burning desire of the Filipinos is to have an international personality. They long for a more dignified place in the sisterhood of the nations. They believe that too long a dependence on

America would only stultify their initiative and their latent energies as a people. Clearly, they cannot hope to be a strong nation or race unless left alone to face the vicissitudes of time. They are perfectly willing to take a chance. It is a manly attitude and should not be discouraged. It should command instead the admiration of this stalwart republic. Certainly it deserves the encouragement and support of *true* Americans.

Signs of impatience for the long-awaited freedom are already visible in the Philippines. The people feel that justice delayed is justice denied. America, indeed, has been generous but unseeing. She has chosen to listen—unconsciously, let us hope—to the incantations of bigoted interests with regard to the capacity and attainment of the Filipinos, and not to the testimony of her duly appointed representatives. And the

America Generous But Unseeing Filipinos properly inquire: Of what use are America's official representatives in the Philippines if their opinions and recommendations are to be discarded as soon as uttered? There is Governor General Harrison, for example, and there is Vice Governor Yeater. They have repeatedly made statements substantiating the claims of the Filipinos that they are ready for their badge of sovereignty. Governor General Harrison personally appeared before Congress the other day. Under his responsibility as representative of the American people in the Philippines he stated that the Filipino people are ready for an independent status as a nation. What was the result? A portion of America smiled. A portion said that the official did not know what he was talking about. A portion stated that the Governor was playing politics and riding for a fall. A portion is asking: "Is it possible that the Filipinos have advanced so far?" The limit of jaunty indifference was reached when the joint committee which heard the presentation of the Philippine case pigeonholed the plea for independence, to be resurrected time alone knows when! We repeat our query: Of what use are America's official representatives in the Philippines if they are not to be believed?

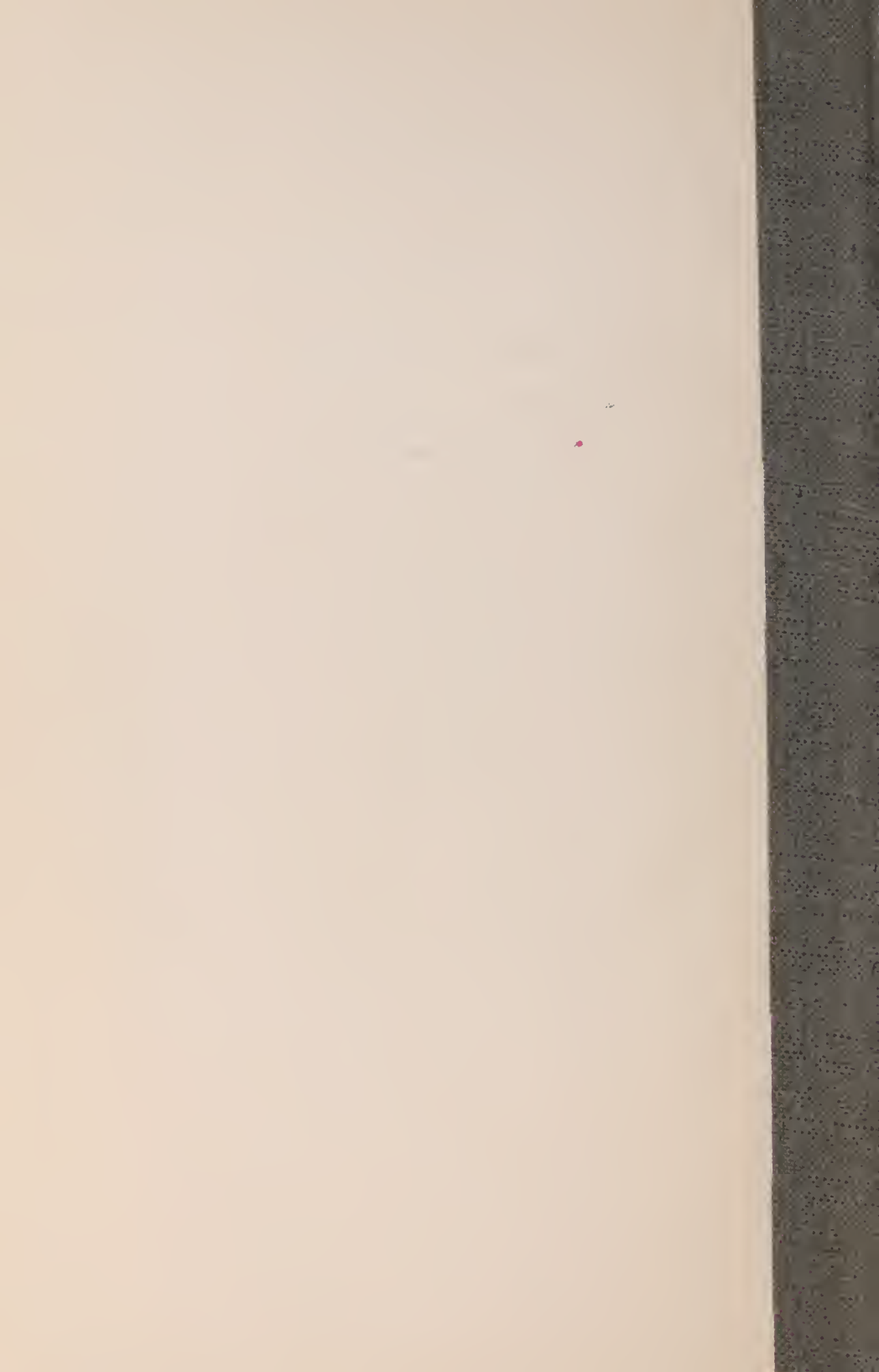
Retention of the islands is sought to be justified on many grounds. Fear of aggression on the part of Japan is one of them. Magnified with a thousand doleful phrases, this is the ground that

has been repeatedly pushed to the forefront to scare the Filipino-
But in thus hesitating to turn the islands
Grounds for *loose, because Japan might gobble them up,*
Retention Refuted *does not America, to quote the Charleston*
(S. C.) American, "openly confess that she
has failed to make the world safe for democracy?" Is the world
to understand, then, that America dares not challenge the power
that dares lift its finger to defile the magnificent colonial handi-
work that is the Philippines? *Shall democracy be ever cowed in*
front of dynastic imperialism?

Then, it is said that the Philippines are being held as a trust
to civilization; that the trust is a sacred trust; that it must be
fulfilled before the islands could be allowed to go to shift for
themselves. Pray, tell us who shall decide whether the sacred
trust has been executed or not? Will it be the imperialists who
would cling to their outworn creed even though the heavens fall?
Will it be the commercial interests of the land whose deity is
the Dollar? Will it be the exigencies of politics? If any of these
be the case, then Philippine independence will never come to pass.
For plead for it as best we can, any of those as the judge will
just be standing by "as unheeding as the Nile."

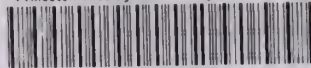
Finally, we are told that this is not the time for talking inde-
pendence, that the world is in a state of flux, that it is unsafe
to let us embark in the turbulent tides of international affairs.
And yet other small nationalities of the world were given their
freedom even before the smoke of battle had died away. They
are nations, too, that are sandwiched between dynasties and
peoples born and reared beneath the dogmas of haughty militarism.
And America, in all her present greatness, rejoices to behold the
scene, because it was her job! Shall there be exceptions, then, in
international justice? Must America sympathize only with the
cause of Ireland or only with the cause of Poland, or of the
Czecho-Slovaks? How long will the shot heard around the world
be turning back against the principle which propelled it?

The Filipinos cannot but wonder!



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